

Contribution to a Study on Women Political Participation in Nigeria

Perpetual Chinelo Chukwuorji

Supervisor: Prof. Doutora Sónia Infante Girão Frias Piepoli

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Contribuição para um estudo sobre a participação política das mulheres na Nigéria

Autora: Perpetual Chinelo Chukwuorji

Orientadora: Prof. Doutora Sónia Infante Girão Frias Piepoli

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Júri:

Presidente: Doutora Maria da Luz Ramos, Professora Auxiliar do Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas da Universidade de Lisboa;

Vogais: Doutora Sónia Infante Girão Frias Piepoli, Professora Associada do Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas da Universidade de Lisboa, na qualidade de Orientadora;

Doutora Ana Lúcia Sá, Professora Auxiliar do Departamento de Ciência Política e Políticas Públicas do ISCTE, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in loving memory of my parents who sadly passed away years ago, may your gentle souls keep resting in the bosom of the almighty.

To my family and loved ones, for believing in me, encouraging and supporting my academic dreams, I love you all!

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACHPR - African Charter on Human and People's Rights

AC - Action Congress

ACN - Action Congress of Nigeria

ANPP - All Nigeria Peoples Party

APC - All Progressives Congress

BPFA - Beijing Platform for Action

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

FMWAYD - Ministry of Women's Affairs and Youth Development

ICCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICPD - International Conference on Population and Development

INEC - Independent National Electoral Commission

LGA - Local Government Area

MDGs - Millennium Development Goals

NACWIP - National Action Committee on Women in Politics

NCCC - National Consultative and Coordinating Committee

PDP - People's Democratic Party

PPA - Progressive Peoples Alliance

PRP - People's Redemption Party

UDHR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN - United Nations

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ABSTRACT

Women political participation in Nigeria politics has been an issue of concern in the Nigerian society at large because women are poorly represented in both elective and appointment positions in the political system. The level of women's involvement in their nation's political activities is a topic that most academic researchers tend to discuss with rapt attention and concern.

This Paper examined and analysed the efforts and challenges Nigerian women are experiencing in the political space. It went further to look into the participation of women in the pre-colonial, post-colonial and contemporary Nigerian politics. It also discussed the low participation of these women in politics and the social, political, cultural and financial challenges they encounter in their quest to participate or contest in leadership positions.

Consequently, the quest to participate in political activities ought to be a voluntary act and not gender based. Citizens of every country, irrespective of their gender, social class or tribe should be able to exercise their civic rights without facing discrimination or being relegated to the background, especially in a democratic country like Nigeria where political participating is believed to be "free zoned " for all qualified citizens regardless of their gender. However, the reverse seems to be the case in Nigerian political system.

It also discussed the gender inequality in the country's political system which could be linked to certain cultural and traditional practices that have systematically conditioned and treated women as being inferior to their male counterparts. These "practices " could as well be perceived as some of the major factors obstructing the women folks from effectively participating in Nigerian politics.

Finally, the paper pointed out some factors that hinder Nigerian women from actively participating in politics, hence provided some recommendations and measures that could be adopted to enhance the re-integration of women in the Nigerian political system.

Key Words: Women, Politics, Discrimination, Election, Nigeria, Political Participation.

RESUMO

A participação de mulheres na política da Nigéria tem sido questionada por setores sociais, porque as mulheres estão mal representadas em cargos eletivos e nomeados no sistema político nigeriano. Portanto, o nível de envolvimento das mulheres em atividades políticas na Nigéria é um tópico que a maioria de pesquisadores acadêmicos tende a discutir com muita atenção e preocupação.

No presente estudo trata-se de uma análise e uma reflexão acerca dos esforços e desafios que as mulheres nigerianas estão enfrentando no espaço político, bem como, interessa-se examinar a presença de mulheres na política nigeriana pré-colonial, pós-colonial e contemporânea. Discuti-se, ainda, a baixa participação das mulheres nigerianas na política e os desafios sociais, políticos, culturais e financeiros que elas encontram ao pretenderem disputar cargos de liderança.

Desta forma, a busca pela participação em atividades políticas deve ser um ato voluntário e não de gênero. Cidadãos de todos os países, independentemente do gênero, classe social ou tribo, devem exercer seus direitos cívicos sem sofrer quaisquer discriminações ou estarem relegados a segundo plano. Entretanto, parece suceder o oposto no sistema político nigeriano, pois apesar de ser uma democracia em que a participação política é considerada “free zoned” e todos possuem a qualidade de cidadãos.

A desigualdade de gênero no sistema político nigeriano pode estar ligada a certas práticas culturais e tradicionais que sistematicamente condicionaram e trataram as mulheres como inferiores aos homens. Estas “práticas” também podem ser percebidas como alguns dos principais fatores que impedem as mulheres de participarem efetivamente da política nigeriana.

Finalmente, o estudo aponta alguns fatores que impedem as mulheres nigerianas de participarem ativamente da política e além de fornecer recomendações e medidas que podem ser adotadas no sentido de melhorar a reintegração das mulheres no sistema político daquele país.

Palavras-chave: Mulheres, Política, Discriminação, Eleições, Nigéria, Participação Política.

INTRODUCTION

In most societies, women constitute 50% of the population. Afolabi et al. (2003) indicated that women constitute over half of the world's population, contributing in vital ways to societal development. Nigerian politics is predominantly a politics of men; men dominate the political spaces (Ajibade et al, 2012). Men are mostly in charge of the political game, economic and other social arena. Women are marginal in national politics and more generally in the public and private life of the nation (Muhammed, 2006). Politics is very important for many parties of human life (Tapan & Kusum, 2018). More so, it is imperative for the existence of statehood and the way in which people interact, make decisions and settle disputes because people live in groups, there is a need to make decisions about how power or available resources to the group are to be distributed or how conflicts which arise within the group are to be solved (Tapan & Kusum, 2018). The study of politics is the study of how such decisions should be made. Consequently, politics can be defined in two ways; firstly, it can be viewed as the study of power and secondly, as the study of the conflict resolution (Bentley, Robson, Grant, and Roberts., 1995). Politics involves the power of the state. It also has to do with power worries and the manner in which power is appropriated among the general public or society. While power is mostly held by the government and its representatives (Bentley et al., 1995).

However, it is essential for every citizen to be actively involved in the political and decision making of its country. Political participation is "the active engagement by individuals and groups with the governmental processes that affect their lives" (Khadar, 2013). This includes, involving in decision making and acts of opposition. Acts of active engagement includes conventional political participation (such as voting, standing for office and companionship for political party) and unconventional (acts, which may be legitimate such as signing a petition and attending a peaceful demonstration), or illegal (such as violent protest and refusing to pay tax) (Charles & Tayo, N.D). Hence, political participation is those voluntary actions through which citizens seek to influence the decision - making of public policy.

The emphasis on women's involvement in politics is as important as their effectiveness in political positions and their impact on decision making. Although, having women in political positions is not enough, as most of these women still encounter different obstacles from their male counterparts when trying to promote women's interest (Gurr, 1970). On the surface, equal political representation in numbers indicates a sense of gender equality, but women in Nigeria, as in the rest of sub-Saharan African, still face many struggles in this male dominated sphere, such as discrimination both in contesting for political positions and in allocations of political offices, lack of adequate finance to effectively participate and views that stigmatise female politicians as being loose. Over time, few

women have maintained a prominent role in Nigerian politics, and so the place of women in Nigeria's political and social firmament has always been a strong one (Ake Modupe et al., 2019). Though, women have been relegated to the background on issues of national development especially in developing nations like Nigeria (Funmilayo, 2019). This is likely borne out of the sentimental attachments of feminine gender. Political participation is an essential part of every Human, both men and women. The United Nation (UN) exerted its human rights core instruments and recognised political participation for every individual, as a fundamental political right.

It is a core element of a democratic system based on consent of the people, and more importantly it allows the people to fulfil their obligations toward their society by engaging in conversations and exchanging opinions to determine the responsiveness of the development process to the needs and interests of all segments of the society (Abdi, 2007). The importance of the right to participation as a means for the individual to involve in the political affairs and decision-making process of his/her society is recognized and protected in article 25 of adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) on 16 December 1966 the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Bashir, 2018). In exercising the right to participation, the men and women should be provided with an equal opportunity to participate in the political system ranging from voting in elections, holding important positions in the legislature, executive and judiciary both in federal and state levels. In other words, the women and men in exercising their rights to participation will be enabled to contribute equally in the decision-making process through public debate, and dialogue with the elected representatives or through their capacity to organise themselves; or exercise public power by holding public office at different levels of administrations- in national and international levels (Abdi, 2007).

Data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in April, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 general elections show the high level of women marginalisation in Nigerian politics. For instance, of the 7160 candidates that contested in April 2007 election, only 628 were women, 25 people out of these candidates vied for the office of the president and only one was a woman, while 5 women contested for the office of the vice president (Ake Modupe et al., 2019). More so, only 9 out of the 109 senators were women, and there were only 54 female members of the State Assemblies (Vanguard, 2011). Looking at Nigeria recent presidential elections, Sarah Jibril was the only female amongst the three presidential elections for 2011 Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential election primary, the other two were men, this depicts the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian political system (Ake Modupe et al., 2019).

In the 29 states where governorship elections were held in 2011, the representation of women seeking the office of governor and deputy stood at 87 (22.9%) out of the 380 candidates running for the positions (Nse Etim, 2018). Only 32 women were elected to the national assembly out of 469

members, which is just 8% of the total representatives and out of the 109 senators who emerged winners at the 2011 polls, only 7 (6.4%) were women (Eme et al., 2014).

In the 2015 and 2019 general elections, out of the 109 senators who emerged winners at the 2015 general elections 7 were females and in 2019 general election, 4 were females (INEC, 2015/2019 General Election). Women have also vied for top political offices, for example, the likes of Sarah Jubril and Professor Oluremi Sonaiya of KOWA party who contested for the office of president with former president Goodluck Jonathan in 2011 and 2015 respectively; also, Hon. Mulikat who strongly contested for the seat of the Speaker of the House of Representatives (Chioma, 2015).

The essence of political participation in any society, either developed or under-developed, is to seek control, acquisition and dispensation of power to organise society, harness and disseminate resources and to influence decision making in line with the people's interest (Arowolo and Abe, 2008:13-14). Everyone, (women inclusive) seek to influence the dispensation of power and resources in line with their interest as a core motive of political participation.

The patriarchal system of the Nigerian society, shapes women's relationship in politics. It promotes the hierarchy of gender relation where men are given more privileges than women. The gender role ideology is used as a tool by patriarchy to relegate and confine women within the household arena as mothers and wives, while the men are groomed to be more involved in public affairs (Makama, 2013). This is one of the key factors that determines the level of women's political participation in Nigeria or exclusion of women in politics.

Agbalajobi (2010) states that, the discrimination against women in politics and decision-making is deeply rooted in the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society that has always treated the women as the feeble and weaker gender which should be confined in the domestic space, while the men are treated with respect and considered to be unique, stronger and fit for the public space.

Over the years, the topic of women's role and participation in leadership positions especially in politics, has generated several arguments amongst many scholars both on national and international levels, as the place of women in politics has always been a controversial topic, (Omodia, Esidene & Abdul, 2013). The controversy surrounding women's involvement in Nigerian politics could be linked to the gender discrimination that is deeply rooted in the society. According to Onyenwere (2017), the issue of gender inequality and women's rights in Nigeria is one that has been neglected and disregarded by the government due to the prevalence of some harmful cultural practices targeted at infringing on women's rights and promoting gender disparity in Nigeria.

Some of the problems that militate against effective women participation in politics include the following: socio-economic factors, socio-cultural factors, the nature of Nigerian politics, ethnicity, women's perception of politics, violence, funding and high cost of election, etc. However, this study intends to discuss some factors that may likely militate against the effective participation of women in politics and decision making in Nigeria.

This study is very significant because it would be useful in increasing the effective participation and decision making of women in politics in Nigeria. The research would contribute to the already existing body of literature on the subject matter. By making the participation of women effective in politics, the study will enhance women empowerment and also address the issue of gender disparity. The effective participation of women in politics will help in the distribution of power and resources. It will empower democracy by ensuring that women are not left out in the course of decision making, policy formulation and governance. It will guarantee political rights of women in the study area.

The study will also help to identify the factors militating against the effective participation of women in politics. This will likely help to increase women's involvement and effectiveness in politics due to the problems being identified and the suggestions that may be put forward. The recommendations that would be made in this study would be useful in proper conduct of subsequent general elections in Nigeria. More so, there is no knowledge that is waste, therefore, the study will enhance the skills of the researcher by adding to the knowledge of the researcher and the readers of the study. Nevertheless, it will serve as reference material to those who may want to carry out similar research on the subject matter.

Considering the aforementioned points, the Key Research Question will be the following:

What are the measures that will facilitate women's political participation?

The study will be conducted by the following objectives:

Main Objective:

To understand what are the main factors militating against the effective participation of women in politics.

Secondary Objectives are:

- i. Identify the areas women are mostly represented in the Nigerian political space.
- ii. Recognise what is the nature of women's participation in politics (in Nigeria).
- iii. Pinpoint the measures that can be put in place to encourage more Nigerian women to participate in politics.

Scope of the Study:

The geographical scope covers six (6) periodic elective exercises in Nigeria. The temporal scope covers a period of 20 years, that is; from 1999-2019 and the contextual scope covers Women participation in politics from elective to appointive position of decision making in Nigeria.

CHAPTER I

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL EXPLICATION OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA

This work is focused on using qualitative methods to examine women's contribution to political participation in Nigeria using some existing data by other researchers to explore and understand the reason for women's low participation in the Nigerian political system. More so, some key topics such as the social, political, and economic factors that militate, facilitate and contribute to women political participation were explored as well.

A theory should be able to suggest or explain why a subject matter has certain characteristics, in order to have a meaning and value. In other words, a theory must have explanatory predictive and problem solving and not just an intellectual exercise that simply seeks to provide new sets of categories or paradigms. In this chapter, the study examines the past and current literature written by scholars which are related to the objective of the study. Most importantly, the chapter focuses on the factors militating against effective women participation in politics.

Literature review is one of the crucial aspects of a research, which a researcher cannot ignore as it contributes immensely to the advancement of human knowledge on the subject matter. Therefore, before a useful study of any topic could be made, it is essential to review previous related works as this will give a deeper insight about the research topic.

1.1. Some useful conceptual definitions

In the cause of developing this work, it is essential to clarify some important concepts that will be discussed in this study, such as: Democracy, Democracy consolidation and Politics.

Democracy is a multi-dimensional concept and a phenomenon which have been viewed in various ways by policy makers, politicians, analysts, some scholars like: Aristotle, Ujo, Nwoye Oddih and Nzongola-Ntajala, Ezuoku, etc. Democracy originated in ancient Greeks, to the Greeks 'demos', means the people while 'Kratien' means the government or rule (Ujo, 2000:4). Democracy is a concept that has been viewed from two different perspectives which are classical and modern. Several authors have extensively written on the subject matter as can be seen. Thus, Nwoye (2001) sees democracy as signifying a political system dominated by representatives either directly or indirectly chosen by the people. To Ntalaja (2000:14), democracy is a continuous process of promoting equal access to fundamental rights, which shouldn't be compromised but rather be richer than the liberal model, especially in developing nations. Baker (1995) is of the opinion that a political system that operates on the basis of popularly elected or appointed representatives to run the affairs of the state,

which most often than not is premised on effective representation and participation (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2000, Baker, 1995, Philip, 1991).

It is a form of government as well as a way of life, goal, ideal and philosophy which guarantees freedom of the majority and rights of the minority. The World Book, 2001, (in Oddih 2007) maintains that democracy has certain tenets which include: free elections, majority rule participation of political parties, unimpeachable judiciary and parliament. Eziokwu (1998), in accordance with the Report of the Political Bureau (1987), highlights some fundamental constituents and elements for sustaining democracy in Nigeria. These according to him include:

- i. the institutions and processes of functional electoral agencies, political parties and their formation, administration and funding;
- ii. conducting of free and fair periodic elections and electoral processes;
- iii. broad based participation by the electorate;
- iv. observance of rule of law;
- v. protection of fundamental human rights;
- vi. a free and unfettered press;
- vii. a healthy civil society;
- viii. government that is built on the consent of its people (Eziokwu, 1998:16).

Hence, democracy can be regarded as a system of government which involves the widest spectrum of participation either through elections or through the administration of the accepted/adopted policies. It is a governmental system that is founded on the principle of rule of law; it is a government that goes against arbitrariness, high handedness and dictatorship; it is the antithesis of military governance or dictatorships, and it is associated with accountability and transparency. Gana posits that democracy is seen as government by persons freely chosen by the governed who also hold them accountable and responsible for their actions while in government (Gana, 1996:12).

According to (Badru, 2005):

Democracy represents first and foremost an increase in citizens' political equality and equity in terms of their popular participation in the society. He argues that democracy is a system of government that enables both the leaders and the citizens to be conscious of what is required, and accomplish it for the betterment of the society in terms of political, social and economic development (Badru, 2005, 77-101).

This simply means that, in any democratic society, the citizens should be given the freedom to participate in the electoral processes, to enable them choose whom to vote into power without

being sentimental or afraid of the electoral outcome. Democratic rule emphasises majority rule as opposed to the authoritarian rule by the few.

When people talk about democracy in contemporary times, as a system of governance which serves as a framework within which human affairs are managed in modern nation-states, they are basically talking about "Representative Democracy" which have the features or characteristics earlier discussed. The party system is one of the essential tools for democracy. And conflict is quite unavoidable in virtually all democracies. This is true because democracy seeks the effective ways through which a society should be ideally governed. In line with this, Aleyomi; (2013), observed that conflict emanates whenever two or more persons seek to possess the same object or occupy the same position and play incompatible means of achieving their purposes.

Nigeria has been into democratic rule for over 2 decades (1999 till date). However, peace and security are still not guaranteed. To maintain peace and security, the role of political parties and right to participation in the country are paramount. These amongst others include; democratic sustainability, maintenance of peace and security and serve as a unifying force in a divided polity.¹ The general administration of election, despite setbacks, suggests that elections may not be a "fading shadow of democracy" or "without choice" (Schedler, 2002; Omotola; 2010, Aleyomi. 2013). It must be added at this juncture that the modern democracy as observed by Samuel Huntington "is not simply democracy of the village, the state or the city-state; it is democracy of the nation-state" (Huntington; 1991). Contemporary democratic systems require intermediary actors between state and society as well as institutional mechanisms for the articulation and advocacy of diverse views and policy preferences. While civil society organisations have for some time claimed to be the rightful and legitimate 'middlemen'; Magolowondo has asserted that: "it is now becoming axiomatic that in essence, political parties have a fundamental role to play in the experimentation of modern democratic polity that their roles and significance are not to be taken for granted" (Heywood, 2002).

Consequently, the concept of democracy has become a popular concept in every contemporary discourse. It is now a word that rings in people's minds and springs from their lips as they struggle for freedom and better conditions of service. In its Greek understanding, the word "democracy" is not an arbitrary mixture of letters, but a motivated word constructed with two specific parts: demos which means "people," and kratos which means "rule" or "authority." "Democracy" in itself embodies the idea of the people ruling (Francis, 2001). This indicates that it is a form of government where the people directly make decisions independently without any representation. However, democracy was reintroduced in Nigeria some years back (May 29, 1999) after a long political history dominated by

¹ Administration of Justice and Internal Party Democracym available at <https://sprojectng.com/administration-of-justice-and-internal-party-democracy/>

military juntas (Osakue, 2010). This indicates that Nigeria is somewhat young in democracy. Izibili and Eribo (2008) observe that, there are many literatures works on the concept (democracy), there is an obvious absence of consensus by scholars on the proper definition of the nature and contours of the term such that it is rather difficult to argue for a specific conceptualisation of the term as the proper meaning since democracy is presently being as a term with many meanings.

Owolabi (1999) in replying the above observations, states that if we define democracy as the "rule of the people" or "sovereignty of the people", without defining it on the prevailing features among democratic regimes in contemporary society, then the concept will not become a mystery. Izibili and Eribo (2008) also argued that the ideal definition of democracy is that it recognises the essence of the concept as "rule of the people". This means that democracy promotes a system of government where everyone participates in the process of governance. This simply implies that the principle of participation is a vital aspect of democracy and should be reflected in every genuine definition of the concept. Any democratic form of arrangement is supposed to have certain core values for it to be called a democratic state. Izibili & Eribo (2008) assert that these ideals are freedom or liberty, accountability to the people, right to vote and be voted for, among others.

Democracy is a political system in which sovereignty is vested on the people rather than a particular set of people, where the rule of law, majority rule and constitutionalism are basic guiding principles of governance (cited in Ogah & Ogeyni (2014, p. 55). Ramaswamy, however, is of the opinion that democracy entails the rule by the people as contrasted with the rule by an individual or a group of people. He went further to say that it is the people who are both rulers and rule unlike other systems like monarchy, dictatorship or oligarchy where a distinction between the ruler and the ruled exists (Ramaswamy, 2007, p. 377). But a critical assessment of the Nigerian political system contradicts the core elements of democracy. Although Nigeria as a democratic nation allows its citizens to exercise their fundamental human right by voting but the system still does not provide sufficient privileges for their votes to count due to some set of people "cabals" which still preside over the outcome of the election behind closed doors.

We cannot talk about democracy without linking it to democracy consolidation, another concept that should be brought to this discussion. Having known that democracy is a form of government in which people freely choose their representatives through a periodic exercise known as election of which invariably translate to the act of electorates casting their votes, democratic consolidation in the words of Schedler, means the challenge of making new democracies secure, extending their life expectancy beyond the short term and of making them immune against the threat of authoritarian retrogression (Schedler, 1998). In his contribution to defining democratic consolidation, Diamond (1995) argues that democracy can be said to be consolidated when and if it has become so widely and profoundly legitimate amongst the people that it is not likely to break down. He went further to

say that attaining such heights requires behavioural and institutional changes that normalise democratic politics and narrow its uncertainties. Bratton, in his complementary efforts, garnishes that there must be general acceptance of rules to guarantee political participation and competition in such a situation Bratton, (1998). Omotola, in Ojo (2007), states that the list of problems of democratic consolidation as well as the corresponding list of conditions for democratic consolidation has expanded beyond all recognition. It has, according to him come to include such divergent items as popular legalisation, the diffusion of democratic values, the neutralisation of anti-system actors, civilian supremacy over the military, the eradication of authoritarian territories, party building the organisation of function interest, stabilising electoral rules, the routinisation of politics, the dispensation of state power, introducing mechanism of direct democracy judicial reform and the alleviation of poverty and economic stabilisation (Ojo, 2007).

The concept of politics on the other hand, has been viewed in different perspectives by scholars who have written on the subject. To the Greeks, the polis was the most relevant community beyond the family level. It was argued that any community larger than the family contains some political elements (Idahosa and Idisi 2005:3 in Ikelegbe ed.). Politics has been defined in many ways, amongst which are that of Aristotle, that it is a master science. He considered the state as the most inclusive association formed by man where he can fully develop. Therefore, politics deal with the state of the state. Aristotle's main reason for criticising these definitions is that he neglected the aspect of politics which discuss the interaction of state (Ekpekurede and Umokoro 2010, cited in Efanodor, 2017)

It is however observed that the various definitions above consider the concept of politics from the viewpoint of the normative function of politics which is the resolution of conflict of interests. However, it is necessary that its ascriptive value be also put to bear. In doing so, the concept of politics will not just be limited to the view of the developed countries but will also be relevant to the context of the developing countries particularly Africa. The holistic approach to the concept of politics is however observed by Williams (1980:69) in his view of politics from two perspectives. Firstly, that politics is a discreditable activity whose virtue is the competitive pursuit of private interests and secondly, that politics is concerned with the administration of the common affairs of the public, a matter of universal rather than particular concern, whose aim is defining and promoting the common goods.

The definition of politics according to Modebadze (2010) varies from time to time and from place to place. In other words, politics is a loaded term. It has various meanings when used on a daily basis. Politics is defined in various ways such as: the study of conflict resolution, art of government, the conduct and management of public affairs, etc. Scholars like Akubor (2018) have stated that there exists such a connection between politics, politicians and nation building. This is due to the fact that the concept of politics describes a process by which individuals ("politicians" on one hand and the

people on the other) debate on matters concerning the 'polis' – that is the political society – and make moves with regards to the public interest or the benefit of everyone. The public interest remains the main criterion for measuring nation building. Thus, politics is linked to activities of governance by political actors, with the intention of setting up institutions, structures, and infrastructures focused towards public interest and nation building.

Political specialist commonly utilises the term position to depict out of choice of a sovereign government that all residents should acknowledge or follow. The issue with this view is that it isn't inside political settings that qualities are or might be distributed. Qualities are ordinarily designated in other social units and associations, which their individuals are needed to agree to on the off chance that they most dodge censure or even discipline, for example, removal. This implies that allotment with this unit may not be less definitive than that of by and large perceived political association, for example, Government and ideological groups (Akeke, 2008).

Kate (1970) defines politics as "power structure relationship, which means, an arrangement whereby a group of people are controlled by another". Politics is focused on the institution and the process of acquiring power. It is also an activity through which people strive to acquire power in the society. Equally, Ball (1971) sees politics as those public issues that gave rise to conflict in many human societies or groups, there are always differences in opinion or clash of interest which inheritably lead to conflict. In all organised human societies, primitive or modern, past or present there is bound to be agreement and disagreement, for instance, election is a public issue and all political parties in the country agreed in its principles and practice, that is the process that legally give public office seekers the control of such power could lead to disagreement and thus generate conflict.

Sodaro (2001:27) proposed that politics is a cycle, which implies its continuing sequence of activities and interactions among different actors (people, organisations and government) which mostly occur within a structure of rules, procedures and institutions instead of erratically.

The essentialness of politics to the existence of statehood makes Appadurai (1974:4) conclude that politics is "the science which examines the state and the condition required for its existence and development". Following this view, Dahl (1963) defines politics as any steady example of human relationships that includes power and supremacy.

So far, the conceptual definitions of politics depict the perspective of these scholars as it identifies with the topic of discussion, one could find the core value of politics from their various views. Therefore, politics involves issues like; exercising power or authority, collective decision-making, distributing scarce resources among contending factors, the making and preserving of rules and the act of deceit and control. The permeation of politics in all aspects of life owes to Aristotle's conclusion that it is just within a political society 'that individuals can enjoy a good life.' It is crucial to come to

the realisation that all social issues are in one way or the other connected to political choices of the power that exist, a participation in this basic element of a political framework is consequently a lot of a need (Kumari & Kidwai, 1994).

1.2 Meaning of Political Participation

Political participation as a concept discusses and explores the level at which each citizen of a given country participates in the nation's political affairs by making decisions on who to elect into power, how resources should be allocated and distributed Odetola & Ademola (1985). In other words, every citizen (adult) of a nation has the civil and political right to participate actively in the country's political affairs.

Momodu (2003) suggests that the issues of women's political participation, representation and governance should be viewed from four perspectives. Access, Participation, Representation and Transformation. Access to political organisations, participation (which encompasses control of power within such organisations), quantitative and subjective representation and the outcome will be social and political change in the nation. The fulfilment of these four conditions can enhance the chances of women being politically empowered.

The idea that women's involvement in politics is important, is supported by three reasons: Firstly, politics is a significant arena for decision making. Government officials tend to decide how to distribute scarce resources, for example, tax incomes. People holding governmental positions make political choices that may favour a few people to the detriment of others. Politician's decisions are most likely to affect individual choices by encouraging some behaviours and outlawing others. Secondly, political power is a valuable good. Those in political power preside over other social organisations, such as the family. Thirdly, holding a political position is to hold a position of power (Paxton, 2010). Women in positions of authority can make an informed decision on issues that concern women in general and positively impact the lives of the female gender.

Political participation is the degree and types of the people's contribution in governance and related organisations of society, for instance, the economy and culture. In active sense, it includes participating in political missions and discussions, being present in political gatherings or strategy meetings, casting votes during elections, indicating interest in political positions, holding a government and party posts (Igwe 2002, cited in Osimen et al., 2018). Okolie's (2004) also defines political participation as the freedom of expression, association, right to communicate freely, influence decision processes, and right to social equity. According to him; it further expresses such rights to demand for better health and social services, better working conditions, and increase in wages, among others.

Thus, in this case, this will be used in a restricted sense of not just participating in electoral politics, but to also stand as a contender for elections.

The importance of political participation in any society, either developed or undeveloped, is to seek control of power, allocation of resources and making decisions in accordance with collective or individual interest (Arowolo and Abe, 2008). All groups (women inclusive) aspire to influence the dispensation of power in accordance with their personal interests as the main purpose of participating in politics. In recent times, women in their subconsciousness, progressively seek for power equations, distribution and allocation of resources in their favour. Albeit, cautious observations have shown that the inclusion of women in Nigerian political space is generally noticeable at the voting stage and dormant support. Adeniyi (2003) suggests that violence and other forms of political conflicts caused and sustained by the men (mostly youths) is the major barrier that hinders Nigerian women from actively participating in politics. There are ongoing arguments with regards to specific roles women should play in society, whether they should mainly focus on household affairs or also participate in other socio-political and economic activities like their male counterparts (Dare & Folorunso, 2012). For instance, Onyenwere (2017) argues that women not having equal opportunity as their male counterparts to participate in political positions is a form of oppression and discrimination against them, while Ejumudo (2013), on the contrary, argues that political gender inequality in Nigeria is not an oppression against the women or marginalisation in the Nigerian political space, rather it is simply and evidently a natural phenomenon as the women, right from inception were created as subordinates to men, while the men are structured to “lord” over them. In other words, women are naturally pre-disposed towards socio-political activities.

While it is assumed that the natural relationship between a mother and her child may compel and restrict her to lose interest in some social and political activities, it is also essential that such mother contributes her quota to the advancement of her family and that of the society at large (Dare & Folorunso, 2012). The consistent marginalisation of Nigerian women denies them the chances of participating in these functions. It is intriguing to note that society only acknowledges the relevance of women in politics as voters in a democratic process, still they are perceived as being incompetent to hold political position, hence hindering them from participating in the power structures and pursuing their political goals.

Women access to positions of power, when they are in a minority, is not certainly a guarantee for greater coordination of women’s interest in general, and it also clarifies why they risk having their basic needs subsumed in their interests with regards to their involvement in a specific class, cultural or ethnic groups cited in (Guzman 2004, cited in Osimen et al., 2018).

The representation of women in politics can add to "the feminisation of the political plan" that is the articulation of women's interests and views in a public argument as much as "the feminisation of legislation" that is the effect of public policies on women needs are needed to be considered (Dovi, 2006). In most cases, gender related issues in a male dominated parliament are either neglected or are mostly addressed from the male perspectives. In another instance, the female lawmaker(s) may need to persuade or convince their male counterparts to see reasons why a particular gender bill should be passed. Financial instability is one of the fundamental factors that hinders female participation in politics. More so, she noted that individuals who do not support the idea of women involvement in politics are strongly against the idea of women going out of their way to encourage or convince others to participate in politics (Asase 2003, cited in Osimen et al., 2018).

According to Suleiman (2009), "The minister of women Affairs and social Development" in her response to the issue of women emancipation, denounced low participation and marginalisation of women in the Nigerian political space, ascribing it to the hostile political atmosphere in Nigeria. She also attributed the low percentage of women in politics to the prevalence of violence and patriarchy in the political space, coupled with financial issues.

Money, politics and power are some of the major requirements needed to participate, contest and possibly win elections in the Nigerian political system, and these factors indirectly relegates women to the political background because they are not financially empowered to challenge their male counterparts. Moreover, there have consistently been instances of much violence and killings, and most women are not psychologically fit to withstand these conflicts (Ogbonna 2009, cited in Osimen et al., 2018)

Conventional Nigerian society considers women's education to be in the home front. Therefore, the girl child is informally trained to be domesticated and well behaved. The girls were socialised into domestic chores of cooking, domestic chores, food crop production, child bearing, managing the home and also fulfilling their wifely duties, while the boys on the other hand are trained to get formal education with parental and societal support, and also encouraged to participate in some leadership positions in their communities, these privileges indirectly gave them the sense of superiority over the girls. Consequently, the society unconsciously contributed to the challenges women encounter in the contemporary Nigerian political system due to leadership and education privilege given to the boy child (Ozigbo 1998, Osimen et al., 2018).

Women are mostly identified with the transmission of societal culture and moral values. However, a well-educated population has the tendency to produce an adult population who are well informed and active politically. Educational negligence of a significant population of the society (women) could be dangerous and retrogressive (Okeke 2000, cited in Osimen et al., 2018).

Women marginalisation has been in existence for decades. Discrimination against women comes in various forms, such as economic, socio-cultural, religious, traditional and political, these and many more hinders women from actualising their desired dreams, especially in politics. These cultures and traditions accord lots of respect to the men while the women are seen as the weaker gender (Ilo & Mike, 2009).

1.3 African Feminist Theory

According to (Archer, 2009), there are different feminist theories, various feminist perspectives and definitions. Some African scholars like Nkomo and Ngambi, suggested utilising the African version theory as a theoretical framework to facilitate the subject of African women in insolvent leadership positions. They argued that more research is required in order to understand African women experiences and statuses with regards to leadership positions Nkomo and Ngambi (2009).

As this research is based on gender study in Nigeria society, discussing African feminist theory is fundamental, to give a better understanding on the realities of African culture, traditions, and beliefs.

Okafor & Akokuwebe (2015), affirm that traditional and cultural practices perceive and treat women as being inferior to men which result in women subjugation, while giving room for men to continue dominating women in the political, economic, social and religious realm.

A research in Georgia claims that traditional values is one of the factors hindering women from political participation, considering that fact that women have the greatest responsibilities in domestic works, some cultural and stereotypical roles have been assigned to the women in the society (Nodia & Scholtbach, 2006, cited in Blomgren 2010, p.6). Women subjugation has been in practice right from the colonial period, generally, their participation and political representation in Nigeria has a very long history of marginalisation and domination by men. Perhaps, man has always been characterized by discrimination: racial, class and of course, gender or sex discrimination from antiquity (Abubakar & Ahmed, 2014).

Consequently, the majority of the research works written about Nigerian women contribution to political participation and decision-making shows that, women are poorly represented in politics, and the existing research works also reveals that the factors militating these women from assuming leadership positions are centred on gender inequality, culture, women oppression, patriarchy and religion. In other words, most of these existing works are focused on pin-pointing the major issues that have been preventing women from having rights and access to political positions like their male counterparts in Nigeria.

1.3 Patriarchal Theory

Scholars like Kate (1969) and De Beauvoir (1953) among other authors advocated for the “theory of Patriarchy”. According to Ajibade, Ocheni, & Adekunle (2012), the theorists of patriarchy laid emphasis on male dominance of the female folks. Males are seen as controlling access to institutional power and it is argued that they mould ideology, philosophy, art and religion to suit their needs.

In most societies of the world, economic, political and societal structures are strategically dominated by men and women have been largely subjected to the roles of “second fiddle” in the affairs of things. They went further to affirm that the gender bias in the Nigerian political system is often traced to the onset of colonialism in Nigeria. Hence, the western cultural notion of colonialism woven around male superiority reflected in their relations with Nigerians (Omodia, Esidene & Abdul, 2013).

The above authors are convinced that the presence of the western culture during the colonial period largely contributed to women’s relegation to the background in contemporary Nigerian society, especially in the aspect of political participation and decision-making.

Edegbe & Imafidon (2018), also argued that colonialism played a major role in women oppression in public spaces. According to them, colonialism systematically dislocated women’s status from public life and confined them to domestic duties. They argued that some of the colonial policies stated in the Sir Hugh Clifford’s 1992 constitution, automatically disenfranchised the women from participation in any political activity. From the onset, the British colonialists influenced by the patriarchal attitudes set out to undermine the traditional indigenous structures that empowered women and ensured the balance of gender power in the communities they took over (Anigwe, 2014)

Thus, patriarchy and colonialism are intertwined, taking into consideration that most of the western cultures and policies during the colonial period promoted the dominance of men over women. The men were held in high esteem while the women were seen as their subjects, which automatically conditioned the society to see men as leaders and dictators.

The attitude men hold towards women when it comes to governance is that of relegation, denial, insubordination and sympathy. Silently, women have suffered enormous mishap in religious settings, office place, academic institutions, family living due to lack of proper representation and imbalances in leadership scheme.

What this means is that men are regarded as ‘dictators’ because they refuse to tolerate organised minority groups and insist on a State monopoly of those forces - the press, the radio, the film, and even the culture.

(Ihemeje 2013. Pg. 60).

The above excerpt clearly indicates that women are not only oppressed in political spaces, but also in other parastatals in the society both publicly and privately, including religion which ascribed some

stereotypical roles to the women. Hence, women marginalisation has caused a major setback on national development.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore and gain a deeper knowledge of the issue that militates Nigerian women's participation in politics. Nigerian was selected as a case study because it is my home country and relatively has a low percentage of its women participating in political activities. The study sought to discuss the possible factors that affect women in their desire or quest to participate or contest in any political positions. The main focus is to examine the level of women involvement in the Fourth Republic 1999 - 2019, mainly on the federal level of governance which is the Legislative, executive and assembly.

3.1. Research Design

Research designs a logical way of connecting data to the research problem, question and conclusions. According to Babbie (2007), each research method is unique on its own and also has its strengths and weaknesses, however the subject or topic of interest mostly determines the method of research to be adopted.

The research design adopted in this study is qualitative, which was the most suited method based on the research objectives. The qualitative method of data analysis is concerned with identifying and understanding the attributes, characteristics and traits of the object of inquiry. The method was adopted for this research because the study intends to explore and examine women political participation in Nigerian.

According to Astalin (2013), a qualitative research is an umbrella term for a broad range of different approaches and methods which vary considerably in terms of focus, assumption about the nature of knowledge and the role of the researcher. Thus, the purpose of choosing a qualitative method for this study is because the method will create an in-depth knowledge and give more clarification about the topic of discussion.

This study focused on exploring the level of Nigerian women political participation, examined and analysed the factors that prevent them from being active in politics and the roles gender disparity plays in women political condition in Nigeria. The study objectives and central questions are clearly stated in order to have a better understanding about women political positions in contemporary Nigerian society.

Consequently, the research was carried out by analysing existing information (data) on the phenomenon being investigated. It also involves a survey on the number of women involved in political positions at the government level in Nigeria and the census of areas where there are more women involved.

Method of Data Collection

A qualitative method was adopted for this research. According to Astalin (2013), a qualitative research is an umbrella term for a broad range of different approaches and methods which vary considerably in terms of focus, assumption about the nature of knowledge and the role of the researcher. Thus, data were collected from existing information such as books, journals, and other published materials in line with the subject matter. This method was instrumental to this research because the knowledge acquired from studying and analysing other people's work helped to clarify and proffered a possible solution to the challenges women encounter in the Nigerian political system.

Data Analysis

The study has been able to show the level of women political participation globally, then in the pre-colonial period and the contemporary Nigerian society (the Fourth Republic, 1999 - 2019).

Table 1, shows the percentage of women in parliament globally.

Table 2, indicates the percentage of women in parliament in few African countries.

Table 3, illustrates the statistics of women traditional rulers in the pre-colonial period in Nigeria.

Table 4, shows the number of Nigerian women in presidency in the Fourth Republic

Table 5, shows the list of women who were elected for Governors in Nigeria after 2007 election while

Table 6, indicates Nigerian women in elective positions from 1999 to 2015

The study explored and analysed these tables accordingly. It also discussed the factors that impede women from active participation in politics and the roles gender disparity plays in women political condition in Nigeria. The study objectives and central questions were clearly analysed in order to have a better understanding about women positions and statuses in the contemporary Nigerian society with regards to their participation in politics.

CHAPTER III

WOMEN IN POLITICS: AN OVERVIEW

Globally, the UN is committed to tackle gender imbalance in political space. Thus, to increase women's participation in politics the UN has adopted several measures in recognising the women's right to equitably participate in politics as their male counterparts. Most remarkable one was the universal declaration of human rights (UDHR), which in its Article 21 recognised the right of everyone, including both women and men, to participate in the governmental activities in their country, directly or through freely elected representatives². In order to ensure these rights are implemented the UN adapted the convention on civil and political rights, which obliged the state parties to legally ensure that women are effectively involved in political and public affairs without discrimination on gender basis. The UN also adopted a notable convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination of women (CEDAW), which focuses on women's political rights and the steps needed to promote equality between women and men in the political area.

Although these initiatives yielded results in some areas, however women are still not given enough space to fully participate in politics. This is the reality in many countries in Asia, Latin America, Europe and Africa as UN Human Right Committee discovered that "the right to participate in the conduct of political affairs is not fully implemented everywhere on an equal basis..." (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights & International Bar Association, 2003, p.508).

2.1 African Women in Politics

Africa as a continent is made up of 54 countries³, and these countries have one thing in common which is the prevalence of "patriarchy" in the societies which is linked to the low involvement of women in politics.

However, before discussing African women in politics, it is essential to observe the percentage of women in parliamentary seats globally. As at February 2019, the percentage of women in parliament (single, lower and upper houses combined) regionally could be found in the table below

² A Woman's World - Unity-and-Diversity World Council (2018). Available at: <https://udcworld.org/a-womans-woman/>

³ 7 Continents, available on: <https://www.whatarethe7continents.com/africa-continent/how-many-countries-in-africa/>

Table 1. Global percentage of women in parliament

S/N	Region	Percentage
1.	Nordic countries	42.5 %
2.	Americas	30.6 %
3.	Europe including Nordic countries	28.6 %
4.	Europe excluding Nordic countries	27.2 %
5.	Sub-Saharan Africa	23.9 %
6.	Asia	19.8 %
7.	Arab States	19 %
8.	Pacific	16.3 %

Source: UN Women. facts and figures: leadership and political participation, February, 2019

The above statistic shows that women's low participation and involvement in politics is not just an African issue but a global phenomenon. Excluding the Nordic countries which have a reasonable percentage of its women in parliamentary seats, others are clear indications that political positions are highly concentrated in the hands of men, not just in African but worldwide. In other words, gender discrimination is strongly rooted in the global societies. Women being seen as the "weaker gender" could be linked to their low participation in politics globally.

In contemporary African society, lots of efforts have been put into place to facilitate and promote equality between men and women over the years, this idea has birthed some initiatives and organisations such as: the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), known as the women's international bill of rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs).⁴ In few African countries, women have progressed on the number of parliamentary seats occupied, although it still can't be compared to that of men.

The table below shows the percentage of women in parliament in few selected African countries.

Table 2. Percentage of women in few African countries

WORLD CLASSIFICATION									
Rank	Countries	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Election	Seats *	Wo men	%W	Elections	Seat s*	Wo men	%W
1	Rwanda	03.09.2018	80	49	61.3%	26.09.2011	26	10	38.5%
7	Namibia	29.11.2014	104	48	46.2%	08.12.2015	42	10	23.8%
10	South Africa	07.05.2014	393	168	42.7%	21.05.2014	54	19	35.2%
11	Senegal	30.07.2017	165	69	41.8%	-----	----	-----	-----
18	Mozambique	15.10.2014	250	99	39.6%	-----	----	-----	-----
20	Ethiopia	24.05.2015	547	212	38.8%	05.10.2015	153	49	32.0%
28	United Republic of Tanzania	25.10.2015	393	145	36.9%	-----	----	-----	-----
30	Tunisia	26.10.2014	217	78	35.9%	-----	----	-----	-----
33	Uganda	18.02.2016	459	160	34.9%	-----	----	-----	-----
41	Zimbabwe	30.07.2018	270	86	31%	30.07.2018	80	35	43.8%

Source: Women in National Parliament, Situation as of 1st February, 2019.

⁴ Souad Abdennebi-Abderrahim (2012) Study on discrimination against women in law and in practice in political and public life, including during times of political transitions

The countries listed above demonstrate that women participation in politics is gradually progressing in some African countries, especially in Rwanda which is the leading country in the world with 61.3% women in the lower house and 38.5% women in the upper house. It is indeed a welcoming and commendable development in Africa, considering the fact that African society has always been hard on its women. These countries have at least 30% of their women in national parliament which is an indication that there's hope for African women in politics in the near future.

Unfortunately, Nigeria which in the country of interest in this research is ranked 180 in the "World Classification "with 20 women (5.6%) in the lower house and 7 women (6.4%) in the upper house.

Rwanda being ranked the first globally with 61.3% of its women in parliament, is a clear indication that African women are making progress in the political world. Also, other African countries listed in the table above which have over 30% of women in its parliament is a notable improvement and also proof that the African continent is on its way to experience tremendous change in its political system because women contributes immensely to national development, hence their involvement in the African political system will surely improve and promote good governance in Africa.

2.1.2 Nigerian Women in Politics

Nigeria is a country, located on the western Coast of African, with diverse cultures and traditions⁵ with an estimated population of over 206 million people⁶. The country's official language is English, however there are over 500 native languages spoken, which make the country considered to be one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world. The major ethnic groups and languages spoken are: Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulfulde, Ibibio, Kanuri, and Tiv⁷. Nigeria is made up of thirty-six (36) States and one Federal Capital Territory (FCT), with Six (6) Geo Political zones which are: North-East, North Central, North West, South East, South-South, South West⁸. More so, as at 2019, it was reported that women made up 49.33 % of Nigerian population, according to the World Bank development indicators, collated from officially recognised sources.⁹

⁵ J.F. Ade Ajayi, Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk-Greene (2020). Nigeria, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria>

⁶ Worldometers: Population of Nigeria (2020 and historical), Available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/nigeria-population/>

⁷ Translators without borders: Language data for Nigeria, Availabe on: <https://translatorswithoutborders.org/language-data-nigeria/#:~:text=Nigeria%20is%20one%20of%20the,people%20with%20lower%20education%20levels>

⁸ Journal of Health Education Research & Development (2015) <https://www.hilarispublisher.com/open-access/demography-and-medical-education-among-nigerian-final-year-medicalstudentsimplication-for-regional-and-human-resource-development-2380-5439-1000150.pdf>

⁹ Trading Economics: Nigeria - Population, Female (% Of Total), Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/population-female-percent-of-total-wb-data.html>

Nigerian Women like their other counterparts have contributed immensely to national development. Their roles in nation building cannot be over emphasised as they are forces to be reckoned with. However, they are not well represented in the political system due to the prevalence of patriarchy in the system. Their struggle for political emancipation seems impossible because politics in Nigeria is presumed to be “men’s turf”, hence making it hard for women to enjoy equal opportunity as the men.

In most African countries like Nigeria, women are less represented in the political spaces. Afolabi (2019) depicted for instance that historically and presently in Nigeria and Africa, women faced a lot of problems of inequality. Researchers gathered data on 217 countries in 2016 and the study revealed that 23 years of most women's lives were spent cooking, cleaning, child and elderly parents' care while men were excluded from domestic duties.

The fight for women emancipation alongside the fight for independence and social development of the nation were introduced side by side. Women's fight for equality was prompted by the predominance of male chauvinism and patriarchy in the Nigerian society including the political space. This led to exploitation and marginalisation of women in private and public lives (Afolabi, 2010 citing Soriola, 2017).

The Federal government of Nigeria in an attempt to encourage women participation in politics, establish organisations like Consultative and Coordinating Committee (NCCC), National Action Committee on Women in Politics (NACWIP), Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Youth Development (FMWAYD) etc. The primary objective of these organisations is to mobilise, support and encourage women’s effective involvement in politics. The then ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) has introduced a waiver of the mandatory registration/nomination fees for women aspiring to any elective post on the party’s platform. All these initiatives were put in place as a means to eradicate discrimination against women in the Nigerian political space.¹⁰

2.1.3. Gender Inequality in Nigerian Political System

The term “Gender Inequality” is a topic that has drawn lots of attention and concerns globally, especially in the academic field as many works have been written and discussed it in different dimensions. The importance to mitigate this inequality can never be over emphasised as the act could be seen as the oppression and subjugation of women.

¹⁰ Mohammed Abubakar & Zaid Bn Ahmad, 2014: Women and Political Participation: Toward Attainment of 35% Affirmative Action and Obstacles to the Women Participation in Nigerian Politics and Decision-Making Process

“...gender inequality is a characteristic of most societies, with males on average better positioned in social, economic, and political hierarchies. For more than two decades, the goal of reducing gender inequality has held a prominent place in international organisations and in national strategy statements. Millennium Development Goal 3 reflects the global attention to the issue of gender inequality and has been providing the impetus for governments to eliminate gender inequality in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels by 2015” (UNDP, Gender Inequality, pg. 162)¹¹

Gender disparity could be said to be the major factor that contributes to social discrimination against women as they have been ascribed some stereotypical roles in the society. The sense of superiority accorded to men in the Nigerian society is attributed to male dominance in the political system.

Gender inequality in Nigeria is affiliated to the cultural and traditional practices which are structured in favour of men. The contemporary Nigerian society despite the presence of civilisation still discriminates against women, the society still believes that a woman irrespective of her educational qualification or level of exposure should concentrate on fulfilling her domestic duties. The current Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said in a conference in Berlin, Germany:

"I don't know which party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room."¹²

This statement by the President is a clear indication that even in the 21st century, women are still not considered to be equal to men. Judging by the President's utterances, we can decipher that women's marginalisation in politics is a systematic problem, which makes it difficult for a significant number of Nigerian women to participate actively in politics like their male counterparts.

Male chauvinism in Nigeria's politics system is deeply rooted in religious and traditional beliefs that men were created to be leaders "head" while the women are seen as subordinates. Unfortunately, most women have come to embrace this "myth" as they don't aspire to get involved in politics. Throughout ages and virtually in all cultures, women were rarely considered equal to their male counterparts. In all spheres of life including politics, women are known to have been discriminated, marginalised and dominated due to the gender-biased cultural norms and practices which have always been in favour of men. (Awofeso & Odeyemi, 2014).

¹¹Source: UNDP-Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries (Gender Inequality), Available on: [HumanityDivided_Full-Report%20\(2\).pdf](#)

¹² Germany: My wife belongs in the kitchen - Buhari, Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8NmS-mZIVLs>

2.1.4. Nigerian Women Involvement in Politics

Nigerian Women like their male counterparts have contributed immensely to national development. Their roles in nation building cannot be over emphasised as they are forces to be reckoned with. However, they are not well represented in the political system. The struggle for their political emancipation seems impossible because politics in Nigeria is presumed to be “men’s turf”, hence making it hard for women to enjoy equal opportunity as the men.

Although, the 1979 Nigerian constitution guaranteed the rights of women to actively participate in politics¹³, nevertheless, Nigerian women are yet to fully exercise their civic rights as stated in the constitution considering the obvious fact that the percentage of women representation in the political system is very low compared to their male counterparts. In spite of the fact that Nigeria is a democratic nation which in normal circumstances, should grant both men and women equal rights to participate in leadership positions without gender disparity.

Since the mid 1990s, most African nations have effectively implemented some gender-based laws in their legal and political systems. Nevertheless, deliberate shares rely upon the solid will and responsibility of the party administration to advance Women in legislative issues. Previous president Olusegun Obasanjo's governmental policy regarding minorities in society strategy that prompted women establishing 15 percent of every one of his political nominations approached this pattern, while Umaru Musa Yar'adua's guarantee of 30% of appointment into his government remained an unrealistic fantasy. Public establishment and government all in total lose regard and authenticity according to general society for not fulfilling his promise.

Thus, there was for the most part an expansion in the number of male gubernatorial candidates that had women as their representatives. At the minimum, four parties in Lagos State chose women to vie as deputy governors (Emeet. al., 2008). In 1999, Lagos was the only state that elected a female “Mrs Kofoworola Akerele-Bucknor” as their deputy governor, in spite of the fact that she was later replaced by a male “Femi Pedro” due to some conflict of interest in the political party which was likely borne out of patriarchy. (The Punch, 2011)¹⁴.

¹³The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979, Available on: https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/nig_const_79.pdf

¹⁴ The Punch, (Nigeria) April 29, 2011

2.1.5 Factors militating against women participation in politics

Several researchers such as Uhunmwangbo (2008), Fisher (1997), Epelle and Oriakhi (2003), Olufemi (2006), Fadeiye (2005), Izugbara et al (2003), have written on factors preventing women from participation in politics effectively.

Constitutional issue is argued to be one of the factors affecting women's effective participation in politics. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria serves as a major hindrance to women's active involvement in politics. For instance, a woman who is married outside her local government or state of origin, always encounter constituency problem if she desires to contest for any political position, as she is neither accepted in her native constituency nor her husband's, this makes it difficult for women to have a bearing (stand) in politics (Olufemi, 2006). Thus, married women not being identified with a specific constituency or state in their political journey, makes it hard to actively participate in any political or leadership position. They are practically treated as refugees, they are perceived as not having any base or root, as they move from their fathers' houses to their father in laws' houses, this narrative impedes them from building a political career or identifying with the people in order to gain political knowledge and experience (Fadeiye (2005).

According to Fisher, the majority of the poor and illiterate people found in both urban and rural areas in Africa are women between the ages of 15 and 25. The socio-economic condition of these societies has forced these young women into sex work with the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS infections Fisher (1997). The issue is aggravated by the current trend towards institutionalising money-politics by charging high fees for registration and political nominations. Even-though they seem to grant a nomination fee waiver to the women, they still encounter financial challenges in the course of realising their political dreams due to the high cost of political campaign and expenditure (Uhunmwangbo, 2011).

Most political parties in Nigeria, does not have specific and concise policy for women in their manifesto and party's constitution which makes it tough for women to effectively contest for any political position through these parties (Epelle and Oriakhi, 2003). Furthermore, the exclusion of women from the Nigerian political system and key leadership positions could be linked to the colonial era and experience. The presence of colonisation in Nigeria, brought about a different political ideology and perception, the males were accorded with more respects, privileges and values than their female counterparts (Izugbara & Chijioke, 2003).

Despite these possible challenges women encounter in the national political space, it is important to pinpoint that no sane society will survive and excel politically by the exclusion of almost 50% of its population (women), hence, women's role in national and community development is important. For

instance, an average Nigerian woman has been taught right from childhood on how to multitask, so she tends to effectively play the key roles of a mother, wife, home manager while actively involved in community, political and socio-cultural activities (UNDP, 2006).

In spite of the aforementioned leadership qualities women exhibit, the social and cultural setting of the Nigerian society still restricts and hinders women from achieving their political goals by participating actively in key leadership positions both at the federal and state levels.

Below are some of the factors preventing women's effective participation in politics are, according to some existing works by other scholars:

a. Deprivation of Formal Education

Education is fundamental in the development of any nation especially in a developing country like Nigeria. In other words, education and economic development are intertwined, so the growth of a nation is relatively dependent on the educational level of its citizens. According to Waylen, a significant population of most developing nations are illiterate, hence, there's a strong connection between illiteracy and the low level of women participation in politics considering the fact a required minimum of literacy (certificate) is needed in order to be nominated or contest for any political position, and this procedure automatically disqualifies most women from participating (Waylen, 1996).

In the Nigerian society, most families prefer to train the male child to acquire formal education instead of the girl-child. These families generally assume that educating a female child is waste of resources because they will get married in the long and be incorporated into another family, thus this has resulted in having a large percentage of uneducated and timid women who are ignorant of their civic rights, making it difficult to pick interest in politics as they believe its for the men. Although, it may be true that lots of efforts and awareness have been made over the years with regards to education empowerment of the girl-child, however, there are still many females who desire to acquire a formal education but were denied due to the financial constraint in most families.

b. Socio-Cultural Factor

The cultural practices in the Nigerian has indirectly become a barrier to women's effective participation in politics. Culture could be defined as a collective belief, tradition, ideas, values, shared by a particular social group or population, hence culture as a practice has a strong influence on peoples' beliefs, their perception of life, identities and their behavioural pattern Iwobi (2008). The Nigerian cultural system is strongly rooted in patriarchy. These practices have to a reasonable extent deprived woman of their fundamental human right, the marginalisation of women in the Nigerian political

space is linked to the cultural belief system that physically and psychologically conditions women not to compete with their male counterparts.

c. Ethnic Factor

As mentioned earlier in the study, Nigeria as a nation is made up of various ethnic groups and is considered as one of the most ethnically complex nations in Africa. Ethnic divisiveness of Nigerian politics contributes to the factors that hinders women's participation as most people join a political party or vote for a candidate based on ethnicity. For instance, Women who marry men from different ethnic group are liable to encounter systematic discrimination in their own ethnic group.

In other words, it becomes very difficult for them to actively participate in politics and society at large.

d. Patriarchy

Nigerian as a nation operates a strong patriarchal system, which is considered as one of the major factors that limit women's effective participation in politics. The patriarchal society perceives and treats men as superior beings while the women are seen as subordinates, this gives the men a sense of superiority over the women which make it difficult for women to be easily accepted in a male domination institution like politics. Some scholars like Iwobi, argued that colonial rule played a major role in facilitating and promoting a male dominance society unlike the precolonial where Nigerian women were permitted to participate in political and social affairs of the country without being discriminated against or marginalised by men (Iwobi, 2008).

e. Financial Factor

Financial capability is one of the key criteria in Nigerian politics. However, most women lack the economic resources to meet the high financial standard set in the system. Over the years, gender division and discrimination in the Nigerian labour market has also created an economic inequality, the labour market has about 75% of labour being supplied by men. This economic disparity has enabled the men to possess more economic power over their female counterparts, hence putting the most women at an economic disadvantage and not being able to withstand the financial demands of political campaigns and other leadership positions (Agbalajobi, 2010). More so, the issue of financial incapacitation has resulted in most women depending on their husbands or fathers for financial support during their political journey, hence making it difficult to realise or achieve their political dreams because societal value assumes that political participation and activities are for the men.

f. Family and Societal Factor

Nigeria being a patriarchal society makes it difficult for women to voice out their political intention, yet the few ones who summon the courage to declare their interest are likely to be criticised by the society, family members and fellow women. In most cases, they are advised to firstly seek their husband's or father's permission in order to proceed with their political ambition, and if peradventure the husband or father declined their request, they are expected to forego their political ambition and concentrate on fulfilling their domestic duties (Agbalajobi, 2010).

More so, women who ventures into politics are considered to be promiscuous and shameless because politics is perceived to be a "dirty game", hence any woman who is actively involved in politics is considered to be dirty and wayward, thus the society classifies her as an indecent woman without morals or dignity. In other words, most women prefer to stay off politics as they tend to avoid the societal and cultural stigma that comes with it.

2.1.6 Possible Measures to Encourage Women Participation in Politics

Considering the fact that politics in Nigeria is capital intensive, it is therefore paramount that Nigerian women are economically empowered. They should be given equal access to good education, family inheritance and equal job opportunities as these factors could contribute positively in ensuring women's financial and social stability. It is also essential that women political aspirants are supported by the society at large, this will build an enabling and conducive environment for the women to be creative and resourceful in their political careers. Some scholars like Osimen et al. (2018) and Olufade explained that the effective involvement of women in politics has a strong influence on national development. Therefore, empowering women in major areas like the educational and economic sectors, will definitely promote their effective participation.

Some of the measures proposed by scholars like Olufade, (2013) to encourage women political participation are:

a. Empowering women with skills

Women should be encouraged to acquire diverse skills. So, the government should prioritise the development of women by establishing various skill acquisition centres where these skills can be taught, especially in the rural areas which have a larger population of uneducated women. Considering the rural settings, the government can invest more on agricultural related skills, as most of the women situated in this area are actively involved in farming. Hence, empowering them with modern agricultural skills and tools will facilitate their means of livelihood and financial stability. While, women in the urban areas should be empowered with skills that could be more useful to them based on their environmental demands.

b. Educational Empowerment

Education is assumed to be the bedrock of growth and development; hence these words are intertwined. In other words, education is fundamental for national advancement especially in developing countries like Nigeria. The government should therefore, establish more institutions and organisations to educate and sensitise the society (families) on the importance and the advantage in allowing their female children to be educated. The access to proper education for the girl-child, is rudiment for herself discovery and emancipation. Thus, educational empowerment will propel, equip and encourage women with the required information needed to support their political ambitions.

c. Financial Empowerment

In Nigerian politics, financial capability is one of the key factors required before an aspirant can be taken seriously or recognised by the political parties or society at large. Hence, the government should establish more organisations and institutions that will assist and train women on the rudiments of economic advancement. Hence, women being financially independent will immensely contribute to the realisation of their political dreams in the Nigerian political system.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

4.1. The Nigeria Experience

Most researchers through their works agree with the general belief that women are being marginalised by men in practically all the sectors worldwide. Agbalajobi (2010) and Kira (2003) contended that the constant marginalisation has a theoretical justification. They argue that the subjugation of women in politics could be linked to various factors like religion, culture, traditional and stereotypical practices, hence these structures inherently make it difficult for women and men to be seen as equals.

Globally, women have to a great extent, been subjected to being at the mercy of their male counterparts as most key sectors like the labour market and politics are majorly dominated by the men. Agbalajobi at that point, argued that the oppression of women, with regards to participation has naturally been in practice for decades. He also stated that women marginalisation is not just an African thing but a global phenomenon which could also be found in developed nations like American and Europe. Agbalajobi (2010) goes further to justify his argument by saying:

"This form of discrimination is not simply an African or Nigerian phenomenon but a global one thus both developed and underdeveloped nation states are guilty of the same discriminatory sexist politics.....The only difference is that, it has lasted so long in this part of the world as other developed nations of the world are moving towards gender equality and equity" pg. 077.

In the above excerpt, Agbalajobi stated that gender subjugation is more of a global problem which affects both developed and under developed societies. He stated that, the only difference is that the developed world is consciously putting efforts to reduce the discrimination to minimal by implementing laws that give equal right to both genders.

Agbalajobi (2010) also asserted that women are not just being marginalised in the social settings but also in government parastatals, for example, women are not permitted to stand as a guarantor or sponsor in some federal institutions such as the police force and legislative.

Another example is a popular female Nigerian musician (Onyeka Onwenu) who stood from primaries for seats of chairperson of her local government, narrated her experience in Agomor (2004):

"Because you would be attending late night meetings and you would be staying in a hotel, then you are a prostitute, they would say we are going to give you some millions to be my girlfriend and lots more"

The expectation of women as the moral custodian of their societies is used to checkmate their political participation and most are not seen first as human beings aspiring to better their society

through governance but as sex objects even within party hierarchy, moreover, the use of female candidates, marital statuses as a pre-condition for elective office exerts further pressure on women who have to pave themselves far beyond the men to be accepted. In other words, gender and politics is understood as a hierarchy binary opposition of masculinity and femininity and its intersection with power relations, understood as an expression of politics. Women are socialised from birth to see their place as second to that of men. The birth of a male child is warmly received, to the extent that women often feel that their marriage is not secure until they give birth to male children. Cultural practices are often harmful to women.

Right from inception, the society has never accorded the men and women with equal respect. The men are always seen as the superior ones while the women are seen as a complementary gender, who should be at the service of their male counterparts. Besides societal structure, religious practices and teachings also prioritise the men's needs and ego over their female counterparts, hence putting the women at disadvantage positions.

Religious doctrines, right from antiquity don't accord equal treatment to both genders despite the general beliefs and teaching that all men are equal before God, there's still a wide margin on how men and women are perceived in the religious institution. Consequently, most people have a popular verse in the holy book to justify this:

*“Women should be silent during the church meetings. They are not to take part in the discussion, for they are subordinate to men as the Scriptures also declare. If they have any questions to ask, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is improper for women to express their opinions in church meetings”.*¹⁵

The above excerpt is a clear indication that gender discrimination has always been in existence from inception. Women are instructed not to talk in the gathering of men, nor contribute to any discussion because they are subordinate to men. The scripture further instructs them not to ask questions in public but rather ask the men (their husbands), for it is not proper for women to speak in public (the church). This clearly shows that the political marginalisation women are experiencing today is just a fraction of their daily realities in the society at large. Women marginalisation is evidence in all sectors and organisations.

Society tends to forget women when it comes to issues and decisions that will improve their lives. The idea that a woman exists basically to perform her motherly and wifely role in the household

¹⁵ Living Bible (TLB): The Living Bible copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

is the reason why they are totally forgotten when matters that require their contribution and participation arises especially in politics. Nigeria's political system is greatly dominated by the male folks who naturally see women as their subjects from inception due to cultural, traditional, religious and societal practices they are exposed to, hence this ideology tends to hinder women from participating actively in the nation's politics and leadership positions. Oni & Segun (2012) also posited that women in the rural areas are mostly victims of gender marginalisation due to their low level of education and exposure.

4.2. Women in Pre-Colonial Politics in Nigeria

We cannot successfully discuss or analyse women's political participation in contemporary Nigerian society without also looking into the pre-colonial era before the introduction of western colonisation. In the pre-colonial era, Nigerian women were effectively involved in the political set up of their various communities, from the Northern, Eastern and Southern part of the country. The likes of Queen Amina, Moremi of Ile-Ife, Emotan of Benin, Omu Okwei of Ossomari, etc. played a significant role in the Nigerian political system during the pre-colonial era (Oloyede Oluyemi, 2016). The women of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria which are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa were of great importance to national growth in the pre-colonial period.

However, during this period, women's involvement in the political system in Nigeria varies from one ethnic group to another. In the pre-colonial Igbo society, the women actively participated in the social, political and religious affairs to improve their lives. There's no doubt that the Igbo society intensively operated a patriarchal system where family name and inheritance were mainly attributed to the male descendants which assured them a privileged position in the society. However, in the midst of this patriarchalism, Igbo women were still very much aware of their worth in the society. In the communities, decisions were jointly taken by both men and women, the women fearlessly maintained their identities, values and strength which enabled them to face the complexities that patriarchal tradition and customs brought their ways. The Igbo women just like the Yoruba's, also played significant roles in the economic and social development of the society by actively participating in agricultural production, trading, crafting together with child bearing and home management. They were economically self-sufficient women who assisted their husbands in various ways in order to provide for their families (Anthony, 2009).

Furthermore, the Hausa land had a legendary monarch Queen Amina of Zaria in the 16th century who was so powerful and she is remembered as a political and military expedition to defend, expand and consolidate Zaria as the strongest Hausa state. Also, it was recorded in Borno Empire that the Harem organisation was not a constraint on women's political participation (Awe 1992:265). The

political role of women in Yoruba society is a force to be reckoned with. They had women like the Iyakode, Iyaoloja, who had justification over all Yoruba women and defended their interest in the king's council, an institution dominated by men. The Yoruba ethnic group, still acknowledge the efforts of princess Moremi of Ile-Ife amongst others till date (Sambo, 1991:175).

Table 3. Statistics of Women Traditional Rulers in Pre-colonial days in Nigeria

S/N	Name	Town/Village	L.G.A.	State	Type of Rule
1.	Luwo Gbadiaya	Ife	Ife Central L.G.	Osun	Ooni of Ife
2.	Iyayun	Oyo	Oyo L.G.	Oyo	Alaafin
3.	Orompoto	Oyo	Oyo L.G.	Oyo	Alaafin
4.	Jomijomi	Oyo	Oyo L.G.	Oyo	Alaafin
5.	Jepojepo	Oyo	Oyo L.G.	Oyo	Alaafin
6.	Queen Amina	Zauzau		Kaduna	Emir
7.	Daura	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen
8.	Kofono	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen
9.	Eye-moi	Akure	Akure	Ondo	Regent-Monarch
10.	Ayo-Ero	Akure	Akure	Ondo	Regent-Monarch
11.	Gulfano	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen
12.	Yawano	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen
13.	Yakania	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen
14.	Walsam	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen
15.	Cadar	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen
16.	Agagri	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen
17.	Queen Kanbasa	Bony	Bony L.G.	Rivers	Queen

Source: Kolawale, Adeigbe, Adebayo & Abubakar (2013) cited by (Oloyede Oluyemi, 2016)

4.3. Women Political Participation during the Colonial Period

Before colonisation, women played significant roles in the social and economic growth of their respective communities. Although the positions of women in this period differs, depending on the ethnic group, despite the fact that the society has always been predominated by patriarchy from inception, women's contribution was still very much acknowledged during this period they generally held a complementary position to men. In other words, women's work, efforts and ideas were always considered and valued during this era. The women, invariably were actively involved in the decision making of their various communities and towns. However, the introduction of western colonisation adversely affected women's political rights and active participation in society in general due to the rules and decisions the colonial masters introduced based on their own gender ideology (Mba, 1989:17).

Although it was assumed that colonisation facilitated and improved the well-being of the Nigerian society and fostered national development due to the introduction of formal education. However, the reverse seems to be the case for the women folks, as most of them were not allowed to benefit from the educational system. The system was mainly targeted at educating the male children and the few females who had the opportunity to be educated were not permitted to study or stay together with the males. The unequal access to the education could be said to have contributed tremendously to the political marginalisation women are currently faced with. The men having more education than women, made it easier to take over the political and decision making of the country right from when Nigeria gained her independence in 1960 (Riley, 1997: 43-160).

More so, (Awe 1992:265) posited that colonisation, obviously encouraged women subjugation in the society at large. They stated that colonialism systematically disenfranchised the women from public life and confined them to domestic duties.

The above authors are convinced that the presence of the western culture and education during the colonial period largely contributed to women's relegation to the background in contemporary Nigerian society, especially in the political system.

CHAPTER V

WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY

In southern Nigeria, women previously had the establishment by 1960, Mrs. Wuraola Esa from western Nigeria turned out to be the first female representative of the governmental parliament, in 1961, chief (Mrs) Margret Ekpo vied and won a political position in Aba urban north constituency under the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC), hence became a member of the Nigeria house of assembly until 1966. In Northern Nigeria, even after independence, women were still not given the privilege to political participation; subsequently, the likes of Hjjah Gambo Sabawa who was a notable female politician in the north could not vote and be voted for. However, not until 1999 due to the return of civilian regime (democracy), were women in the North permitted to vote (Oloyede Oluyemi, 2016).

Nevertheless, there was improvement during the second Republic (1979-1983). Few women such as Chief (Mrs) Janet Akinrinade and Mrs. Adenike Egun Oyagbola were elected into the Houses of Representative and Assemblies at the national and state levels as Ministers for Internal Affairs and National Planning respectively. Also, Mrs. Francesca Yetunde Emmanuel was appointed as the first female Permanent Secretary amongst other women were appointed as state commissioners (Oloyede Oluyemi, 2016)

However, long years of military rule significantly advanced the cause of women albeit unconstitutionally as its regimes operated through decrees that lasted only the life span of its administration. Despite women's emancipation in 1976, there was a limitation in their outing for the second republic (Ada, 2003). The advent of the widely acclaimed Better Life Programme of Mrs. Maryam Babangida (1983-1993) witnessed the greatest advancement of gender awareness and the course of women. Subsequently, this was also furthered by another initiative of Mrs. Maryam Abacha tagged: Family Economic Advancement Programme. Nevertheless, observations made of the unconstitutional military regimes; where viewpoints such as the famous "soldier come, soldier go, decree come degree go" was largely in focus, leaving no evident boon accrued to the Nigerian women enough to reposition her automatically to lessen the gender disparities and inequalities (Nigerian Women, 2010: 18-55).

In 1991, there were eight female presidential aspirants altogether. However, the 1993 election only saw one female presidential aspirant. The Abacha's transition (1993-1998) saw 20 females in a House of Representatives made up of 360 members, and also 9 female senators out of 109. Meanwhile, Abubakar's transition (1999) got three women into the senate, 12 members of House of Representative, 143 women as councillors out of 8810, and 9 as chairperson of local government out of 774. (Ada, 2003:3-7 cited in "Money and Politics in Nigeria" 2008, pg. 5).

5.1. Women and Party Politics in The Nigeria's 4th Republic

A real turn around for women occurred in the fourth republic that had more political parties created. This brought about an increase in the number of women vying for political positions as women were to head two of the thirty (30) political parties of this era and ran as their presidential candidate while three other women were nominated as vice-presidential candidates of the political parties. However, in 2002 and 2003 respectively, women were spelt out; the party primaries turned out to be a table of woes for women. Few cases can be cited on the experience of female politicians in the party primaries (Kabber, 2002).

Onyeka Onwenu who hoped to contest election for the chairmanship position of her local government in Imo state had to say:

"The intrigue were many as you have candidate who brought in many to the field, you have candidates who sent buses to get under-aged school children to vote for them, you have candidate who when they were through with this ward, they would get their supporters transported to another ward to stand on the line and vote for them, also you have candidates who had paid officials".¹⁶

Her concern for negation of all sense of decency in the primaries was justified, for instance under the Calabar Municipal/Odukpa Federal Constituency, Nkoyo Toyo who contested at the primary level for the House of Representative seat felt that being a woman will be her main challenge in the primaries and will likely be a determining factor on how far she could go with all the manifest malpractices that were apparent in the primaries. She later understood that there were no rules and even if any existed at all, some people felt that the law was not for them as these rules were flaunted with impunity. Her party, she felt, was structured in such a way to exclude rather than to include some people believed as though they owned the party and spent much effort and time making sure that those they considered as outsiders should not penetrate other terms of getting information or even getting a fair chance to contest.

The result released for the Public National Assembly (POP) primaries directed in Anambra North Senatorial region came as a shock. Delegates were advised to return the second day for the conclusion of the nomination as the first day of the party primaries were inconclusive. By the following day, a result sheet was already being discussed about the supporters of "successful candidate" who laughed at those within to cast their votes (WPL January-March, 2003). The cases of two women

¹⁶Cited in Journal of Socialomics: The Nigerian Woman and The Reformation of the Political System: A Historical Perspective, 2017, pg. 4" (<https://www.longdom.org/open-access/the-nigerian-woman-and-the-reformation-of-the-political-system-ahistorical-perspective-2167-0358-1000196.pdf>)

Joy Emordi's and Oluremi Adikwu-Bakare, an entrepreneur and former gubernatorial contestant who contested under the platform of the ruling party (PDF) for the position of chief executive for Lagos State.

Without prior notice, the party requested she provides a form for clearance preceding primaries which will take her about 312 kilometres from Lagos to Akure and while she was away, the party rescheduled the election primaries for 2a.m. the next day in her absence knowing fully well that she will not be able to meet up. By the time she returned to the party venue, the screening had already ended, she expressed how disappointed she was at how the party members mistreated her and concluded that the results of the primaries were already predetermined by them, this resulted to her leaving the party immediately (Aziken 2009: 10). Moreover, Barrister Nkoyo Toyo also encountered similar issues when she vied for a seat in the Federal House of Representatives. Her main intention was to contest for a senatorial seat initially, but the former governor of Cross River State Donald Duke was advised to contest for Federal House of Representatives instead. She adhered to the advice and proceeded to contest for a seat in the aforementioned legislative arm of government, the said governor also supported her candidacy. However, it is a bit worrisome that in this democratic dispensation, a female political aspirant still needs permission from a state governor (male) or seek for his validation in order to vie for a seat in government (Nkoyo, 2002:34).

The implementation of party reports depends on political will and political obligation to the standards innate in these reports, at all degrees of the party structures, the accessibility is practiced at the federal level and not the state level of the party. From Nkoyo's perspective, a vital part of the principal process of getting acknowledged as a contender for the primaries was connected to being conversant with the politics of infiltration. Despite the formal pronouncement about affirmative action for women in POP, her major concern was whether she has a chance of being acknowledged to participate or contest for the available positions in the political arena. Nyoko's experience throughout the primaries affirmed to her that POP was not an ideal political group. The party system doesn't have a concise plan on how to discuss its ideas, party manifestos and core values coherently. In addition, the party to some extent has also demonstrated it lacks the basic qualities to control its own and also has some extreme principles that make the system uncomfortable for aspirants (Nkoyo, 2002:34).

5.2. Women in Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Below is a statistic of women involvement in contemporary Nigerian political system between 1999 to 2015

Table 4. Gender Statistics for Presidency in the Fourth Republic

S/N	Office	Male	Female
1.	President	1	0
2.	Vice President	1	0
3.	Senior Ministers	24	4
4.	Junior Ministers	15	3
5.	Head of Service	1	0
6.	Secretary of Government of the Federation	1	0
7.	Chief of Staff of the President	1	0
8.	Special Advisers	14	2
9.	Deputy Chief of Staff	1	0
10.	Permanent Secretaries	40	8
11.	Directors General	3	0
12.	Senior Special Assistants	11	2
13.	Chief of Protocol	1	0
14.	Deputy Chief of Staff to VP	1	0
15.	Deputy Chief Press Secretary to VP	1	0
16.	Personal Assistance to President	1	0
17.	Principal secretary to the President	1	0
18.	Special Assistants to the President	20	6
19.	Special Assistants to the Vice President	4	1
20.	Accountant General of the Federation	1	0
21.	Auditor-General of the Federation	1	0
Grand Total		144	26

Source: Ada (2003:30), women in the power equation of Nigerian politics, Lagos: Dat & Partners logistics Ltd.

The table above indicates the number of women in the Presidency in the 4th Republic. We could clearly see that the offices of President and Vice President were occupied by men. The Seniors Ministers has just 2 women out of 24 positions. Even that of the Permanent Secretaries of 40 seats

has only 8 women, also, Special Assistants to the President has 6 out of 20. In total, we could observe that out of 144 seats, women only occupied only 26 which is less than 20 percent.

Table 5. List of Female Deputy Governors elected after 2007 Election

S/N	STATE	NAME	PARTY
1.	Anambra	Mrs. Stella Okife	PDP
2.	Imo	Lady Dr. Ada Okwuonu	PPA
3.	Lagos	Mrs. Sarah Bisi Susan	AC
4.	Ogun	Alhaja Salmot M. Badnu	PDP
5.	Plateau	Mrs. Pauline L. Tellen	PDP
6.	Osun	EneluOlusholaObada	PDP

Source: Adopted from INEC (2007) cited in Charles and Ikenna (2007).

The above table clearly shows women that were elected after the 2007 election. Only 6 out of 36 States in Nigeria elected women into the Deputy Governor's office. However, one of the elected persons "Mrs. Stella Odife" wasn't able to function in her elected position fully as the Nigerian Supreme Court annulled the election the same year, due to some unresolved issues with the Governor elect "Andy Uba"

Table 6. Women in Elective Position from 1999 - 2015

S/N	Position	No. Of Seats	1999	2003	2007	2011	2015
1.	Presidency	2	0	0	0	0	0
2.	Senate	109	3	4	8	7	8
3.	House of Reps	360	12	23	26	26	14
4.	Governorship	36	0	0	0	0	0
5.	Deputy Governorship	36	1	2	6	3	4
6.	36 States House of Ass.	990	12	38	54	62	-
Total		1533	28	67	94	98	26

Source: Akpan (2016:19) cited in "Women in Politics: The Nigerian Factor (2016)"

As at when this data was collated, the number for the 2015 36 Houses of Assembly was not provided by INEC, due to some incidents that led to the result being declared inconclusive. (Women in Politics: The Nigerian Factor, 2016).

The statistics above is an obvious sign that Women are inadequately represented in the Nigerian political space. 2015 elections which reflected a low level of elected women into political positions was quite disheartening considering the lots of women volunteered their time and resources in advocating for the effective participation of women. Various conferences and meetings were held, sensitising women on the importance of getting involved in the political system, hence encouraging them to aspire to participate actively in the elections both on federal and state levels. Prior to the election, the Nigerian Women Inter-party Forum was introduced during one of the meetings in Lagos, the topic of interest during this meeting was named "Rethinking the Role of Nigerian Women in Political Life" which was held for female political leaders at the state and federal levels from the renowned political parties' members in the National Assembly (Okechukwu et al, 2014)

During this meeting, the forum offered a platform for women outside the meeting to discuss their experiences, to support and also encourage other women's participation in politics irrespective of their political parties. Its imperatives were surmised by an attendee, who stated that "women should be empowered and encouraged to aspire for political leadership and governance positions, which is critical to societal and human development" (Olasupo, 2012:16). Prior to this meeting, Mulikat Akande-Adeola who was the chairperson of the House of Representatives declared that the meeting's main objectives were to plan and equip women for their effective participation in politics. She was positive that there would be a significant increase in the number of women participating in political activities nationwide. She further explained that one of the fundamental purposes of the meeting was to empower and support women who intend to participate in the upcoming general elections in the country both on state and federal levels. Commendations were also conferred to President Goodluck Jonathan for the sustenance of his implemented minimum quota of 35 percent of women representation across all political positions and offices in the country (Okechukwu et al, 2014:2).

The host of the conference, Women's Democracy Network (WDN) in partnership with International Republican Institute (IRI) had competent and well-informed delegates in political fields from different parts of the world. The conference started with analysing the level of women's involvement in politics with regards to their fears, strengths, weaknesses by the aforementioned delegates who were invited to be trainers in the conference. They all provided some deep analyses and their personal political experiences, the challenges they have encountered so far in their political journey and their success story as well. All these and many more were discussed at the conference with the aim of encouraging women's involvement in the political space especially in Nigeria, (Okechukwu et al, 2014:2).

Despite the fact that various measures and conferences were held with the main objective of encouraging and promoting women political participation, the result of 2015 Nigerian general election was still not different from the others, the outcome portrayed a similar pattern of women oppression in the political space, the men still dominantly won the major positions in the electoral process. This in turn reflected the absence of a change in the level of unequal participation and representation of women in the political frontier leaving women bereft in a strive that would have laid a significant impact in the presence of policies encouraging female participation (Nse EtimAkpan, 2015).

5.3 Discussing the General Performance of Women in Politics

Discussing the topic of women is vital to the present-day politics of Nigeria. Although, women constitute more than 50% of the total population of Nigeria Nwafor Ezegbe (1998:21), it is observed that they occupy very little or no positions in the Nigerian politics in comparison to the men with an overwhelming number in state power. With a keen look at the politics in Nigeria, men tend to be more interested in occupying political powers whereas women pay more attention to casting of votes rather than aiming for positions. This is affirmed to be true as a result of the relatively enormous number of women during voting. Arowolo & Abe (2013:13) stated, in any given society, the main idea of political involvement is the accession and apportioning of power, to bridle, arrange and circulate societal assets.

Prior to the 20th century, Nigerian women in the Federal Executive Council (EFC) had never surpassed 5%, however, in 1999-2003 during the regime of Obasanjo, there is been upstream where 4(13.7%) women of 18 junior ministries, two women, two senior special assistance, six special assistant, one special assistant to the vice president and eight permanent secretaries were appointed (Nda 2003:62). Inasmuch as the recent uptrend of women's participation in politics, there is still a high level of marginalisation of the women by their male counterparts. This is a compact fact of Women Advocate Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC 2003:34) in the statement, "In spite of the clamour for the women's empowerment by many international organisations, women represent in government and other public decision-making body is still low in the world all over".

There is great diversity in the Nigerian cultures spread among different ethnic groups, but notwithstanding this, there is a similar ideology with respect to women's involvement in politics. In matters of politics, women's involvement is forbidden" (Paden, 1986:3). It is to this end that Ismail stated, the fight for women's political rights goes beyond law making, rather there must be a change in the perspective of the different cultures that prevents and subject women to a zero level of political achievements (Ismail 2001).

The system of democracy in Nigerian cannot contend with the functioning of culture and religion of western democracy in the sense that the standard for western democracy is on the basis of a free and fair election, which does not reflect that of nations in the southern half of the globe. In a sensible more view of politics, the mainstream of western democracy which encourages a sure practice of democracy has been altered by diverse cultures and ethnic groups in Nigeria (Anya, 2004:16). A good example of how poor democracy is in Nigeria is viewed from the standpoint of the theory of “Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs”. To a great extent, the Nigerian political and economic system is encircled within this theory where as a result of increased poverty, the struggle for lower needs (such as food) exceeds that of higher needs (such as love, respect and self-actualization). And as such there is always low or no supporting evidence to votes casted during elections because the elections in most cases are bought in which suitable candidates are replaced by unsuitable candidates. Also, there is the distribution of material items such as clothes, face caps and money for the silence and displacement of competent and well qualified candidates. For example, in the case where Chis Ngige offered a large amount of money to the ex-chairman of NAFDAC, Professor Dora Akunyili (Chuba, 2009:39).

The forecast by the United Nations Organisation of the Nigerian women’s involvement in politics is yet to achieve the 35% mark. Irrespective of this benchmark, there is still a low number of women in matters of the Nigerian politics. For example, this is seen in the current situation surrounding Anambra state where the involvement of the women in matters of politics has experienced inconsequential alteration. And although at the supposition of the presidency, the president, President Jonathan guaranteed an increased number of women in political affairs so as to attain the supposed benchmark, however, there is little or no effect to gaining that percentage. The matter then is, what is the fate of the Nigerian women when it comes to politics? Will there be a sustainable system that truly increases the opportunities of women in politics or is it just a means to achieving political positions by the male counterpart to the ill fate of the women (Paden, 1986:3).

In order to achieve a rather operative and advanced system of politics, it is essential that Nigerians get rid of the mentality of 3:1 in matters of culture and religion and give more support, and delegating more women in political matters. Also, there should be a just system of equal rights with respect to both genders obtaining a political position.

Culled from works of literature and theoretical framework employed, it can be established that women's involvement in governance is gaining no ground, despite the popular declaration of “35 percent affirmative action” in Nigeria, characterized by parochialism, poor attitude, low participation, and high deprivation tendencies. The marginalisation of women in governance is nothing but elongation of male dominance in virtually all political affairs. As such, the historical fact of this nature is strongly associated with the attitudinal views which had often inhibited the chances of women having

more political representatives at the various government levels in Nigeria. Nonetheless, inadequate empirical attention perhaps has also resulted in the unpopular outlook of the subject matter. To ensure effective participation of women in Nigeria politics, there should be a shift from the validity of the conscious rationalisation of culture and religion and credence should rather be given to national rights of equality which negates the relegation of one gender to the favour of another, to encourage women's active participation in the political front.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The result of this study concurred with the objectives, which primary aim was to examine the level and nature of women participation in politics, factors weighing against women participation in politics and measures to encourage women's political participation and decision making in Nigeria. Findings also revealed that women are capable and willing to contest and win election if they are allowed by their families and society at large. The majority of women only participate in registration and voting, although, the people would be willing to vote for women as chairperson of their local government area. As regards to the level of women participation, most women are not given equal opportunities compared to their male counterparts. Concerning possible measures to encourage women participation in politics, economic empowerment, educational empowerment, stoppage of all obnoxious traditional practices and creating more political appointments for women should be encouraged. Women political participation in Nigeria is a topic of great concern and importance. The relegation of Nigerian women to the political background over the years, could be linked to the reason why women are under-represented in leadership positions both in politics and society at large.

However, viewed from the perspective of culture and tradition, women actually face massive resistance from participating in politics. It is pertinent to note that a lot of females believed that politics would prevent them from taking absolute care of their families. Women are generally attached to the happenings in the household due to their upbringing, so they tend to prioritise domestic duties over participation in any social or political activities, hence family responsibility plays a major role in women's low involvement in politics.

In other to facilitate and promote women effective participation in politics, Federal, States, and Local Governments should work hand in hand to support and equip educated women to be able to raise social awareness especially in rural areas in other to instil values in the women and improve their self confidence that has been damaged by patriarchy. More so, the men need to be oriented on the importance of allowing their wives to participate in politics. This is necessary as most of the male respondents are of the opinion that women who participate in politics are irresponsible housewives. In addition, the government at all levels should encourage girl child education. Every girl child whether in the rural or urban areas should be empowered educationally and economically, this will enable her to be morally and financially independent. The exclusion of women from participation on the economic and political fronts is an affront to the spirit and values of democratic governance and free market economy. Women are pivotal to the sustained socio-economic and political development of the society. Women are at the heart of the success of any development policies and programs, indeed, women by virtue of their humanity, numerical strength and unique roles they play are of strategic position to shape and influence the progress in a strategic

position to shape and influence the progress of the society and therefore deserve special attention and care.

Despite the relatedness that has greeted the rise of women in leadership positions of the country in recent time, the positive development however is not a true reflection of the potential rewards and benefits due to women in view of their population, strength, contribution to national development as meeting the call for justice and equity as reflected in the 35 percent affirmative action. There is the need to critically address the societal induced limitations and hurdles to the political empowerment of women in Nigeria. This goes beyond society to the government, political parties, national and international development agencies, civil society and non-governmental organisations to take up the challenges via necessary building to redress the continued political subordination to empowering the society as a whole.

More so, there should be equality in the sharing of political offices on the basis of the quota system between competing candidates. This will create a balance for both male and females to have equal access to such public offices. Furthermore, the Federal Government should make it mandatory that certain public offices be allotted to women on equal basis. As this will dissolve any form of discrimination of women by men. Money politics should be discouraged in Nigeria while women who want to take active part in politics be encouraged to do so without any fear or favour. Also, establishment of legal funds to enable women politicians to challenge electoral malpractices should be done.

The doctrine of the affirmative action, and CEDAW should be strengthened so that they could have considerable impacts on the political landscape of Nigeria thereby curtailing any form of discrimination against women. Also, building a coalition of NGO's and grassroots women associations that coordinates the support and advocacy for women aspirants. Again, there should be a support network and prospective role models: through the identification of aspirants and pairing them with established women politicians, playing mentoring roles and providing capacity building training to young or aspiring female politicians. In addition, there is an enabling environment that allows for women to engage in decision making in a sustainable and effective way free from political harassments and violence. The ideology of male hegemony which has become a dominating factor in the political sphere of Nigeria shall be totally relegated if any positive changes have to be made in encouraging women participation in politics.

Ensuring a proper implementation of the aforementioned suggestions and that of other existing works, will certainly enhance the chances of women effective participation and decision making in the Nigerian political system.

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